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14 November 2005

BLR100646.E

Belarus: Whether Belarusian citizenship is lost when a citizen migrates to another country, including Israel (September 2002 - November 2005)
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

During a 4 November 2005 interview with the Research Directorate, the Consul of the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus provided the following information:

In August 2002, Belarus passed a new citizenship law that stipulates that the Government could no longer ask Belarusians to surrender their Belarusian citizenship once they had become citizens of another country (including Israel). Between Belarusian independence, in 1991, and August 2002 this was not the case, and when a person received another citizenship, the Government of Belarus asked them to renounce their Belarusian citizenship. The person would be required to fill out an application to give up their Belarusian citizenship. The same applied to those immigrating to Israel.

Article 6 of the Belarusian Citizenship Law of 1 August 2002 states that living abroad does not by itself lead to loss of Belarusian citizenship. According to Article 19, loss of Belarusian citizenship occurs when a person serves in the military, police, security services, judiciary or other state organs of a foreign country, except in circumstances where the provisions of Article 20 apply. Article 20 states among other things that people who have no other citizenship and no guarantee of obtaining one cannot lose their Belarusian citizenship. Article 20 also stipulates that Belarusian citizenship cannot be lost by people who have charges outstanding against them, who have to serve a court-imposed sentence, or who have unpaid taxes or other unpaid debts or unfulfilled obligations toward the Belarusian state or any of its [translation] "natural or artificial persons."

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection.

References

Belarus. 4 November 2005. Interview with the Consul at the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in Ottawa.

_____. 1 August 2002. *O Grazhdanstve Respubliki Byelarus* (Belarus Citizenship Law).

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